

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates generally to an assay for detecting variant Hepatitis B viruses (HBVs) which exhibit altered sensitivity to agents. The variant HBVs are delivered to cells using a baculovirus vector. The same agents generally have a particular effect or absence of effect on a reference HBV. The altered sensitivity is in relation to the effects of the agent on one or more stages of infection, replication, assembly or release of virus or virus-like particles including any intermediary steps during the processes of viral infection, replication, assembly and/or release. The identification of variant HBVs with altered sensitivities to anti-HBV agents provides a means of monitoring cross resistance, or the development of new therapeutics effective against variant HBVs with altered sensitivities to other anti-HBV agents, as well as monitoring therapeutic protocols which may then need to be modified to ensure the appropriate anti-HBV agent is administered or that the appropriate therapeutic protocol is instituted. The present invention further provides variant HBVs detected by the assay of the present invention and to components thereof as well as recombinant, chemical analogue, homologue and derivative forms of such components.